

THE WATAO OF HIRALAND

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Amusement. Among the customs of most central tribes, the chief form of amusement, apart from dancing, might be said to be sitting and chatting; it is interesting to note that there is a word to express "sitting up all night talking." Often the younger members of the community will gather about one of the older men and listen to his stories of travel or fighting in the old days, and some men give quite a reputation as raconteurs. Or again middle-aged is indulged in to pass the time. Women and girls do not assist at these sittings.

Among the Tuo youth, wrestling, *tsingpau* (from *tsing-pai*, to try), is practised with a great gusto and no lag-work; the victor always announces his victory by hitting the man who is down, and pummeling his face with his fist as a memento.

A ball game, played originally with a ball of native rubber from which it derives its name, *tsipai*, is a great favorite among boys. A dozen or more are divided into sides but all stand up together. The ball is then thrown into the air to a member of the same side, any of the opposite side jumping into the air to try and catch it, accompanied by the clapping of hands to time.

"*Hik-and-ah,*" *shing-pau*, and "*tsah,*" also or *tsah-tsah* (*shipai*, Chin.), are played by boys.

Chingpau: toward the end of the ball game, when it is decided to finish, each boy as he catches the ball puts it to his nose to smell (*tsing-pau*, to smell). He is then "*out.*" At the end of a game of "*tsah*" played in the water, when one touches another, he jumps out of the water, puts his dish up to his nose "*to smell,*" and is then "*out.*" He then may be thrown to him to "*smell*" while still in the water, after which he gets out without bump. The object is not to be the last "*in.*" I am unable to explain this custom.

Kan-tsai-tsai is played by girls, *tsah-tsah*, from "*tsah*" the reflexive made when catching anything.

Shin-tsai: the Board and Counter game is played in nearly every Tuo village. Dr. Henshaw¹ has given a very complete account of a number of the games played by the several tribes in Hyland and I need add nothing to his explanation of the methods of playing.

Other games are widespread throughout China and are well known to the West Coast under the same names. The several games are played, either simply with balls in the ground and small stones, or with a board and a kind of seed procured from *Samanea*. The board is called *shin-tsai* and the pebbles or seeds or other materials "*tsai-tsai*" *shin-tsai*. Dr. Henshaw uses this word as the name of one of the games. The largest and the commonest. The balls in the board or in the ground (Pl. XIII, fig. 11) are called *tsai* (say, *shipai*) from *tsing-pai*, to strike, beat, or put down with a stick, to "*push down,*" and refers to the way the stones are "*pushed down*" in the holes on the board when playing. The large number at the end of the board is simply to tell the number out of play and is called *tsai-tsai*, "*the stones,*" or *tsai-tsai*, "*the balls.*" The stones are

¹ Henshaw, Dr. Henshaw, "Notes on the Games of the Tuo," (Ann. Ent. Soc., 1912, vol. 4, p. 10-11).

called *hany*, *hany* or *hany*, the words given by Dr. Sanderson, are not known to the Yao in this district. There is a simple game played among the *hany* children and therefore called *hany* (*hany* or for children), but the common game played is more difficult as shown by Dr. Sanderson. *hany* is being partly displaced by a Swedish variety called *hany*, or often by the Yao, when (J. IV, fig. 4). I may have also pointed out that the words *hany* and *hany*, which Dr. Sanderson uses for the *hany* and *hany* varieties of the game, are often replaced by *hany* and *hany*.

The children play at leaping from a little grass structure, made near the village or in the fields, while their parents work. Children who are only twelve may be seen practicing shooting the steps of their *hany*. The boys play with miniature *hany* and arrows made of a kind of grass, and make a toy dart club, as (J. XXII, fig. 4). Little dog and mouse *hany* *hany* are made for them to sell to *hany*.

Among the *hany* is a village, games of fighting are much indulged in; two sides are opposed and their weapons are of various kinds. Sometimes each is armed with a length of bamboo, into the hollow end of which mud and pebbles are put, representing powder and shot. This end of the bamboo is then rapidly swung in the direction of the "enemy" and will discharge the mud and pebbles into the face of the opponent. This is called *hany* *hany* ("go for mud"). The boys are sometimes armed with *hany* clubs for throwing at each other.

There is another form of fighting. Armed with a collection of small stones, each takes his stone at the enemy with very good aim, using the forefinger of the right hand to propel the stone, the index of the left hand acting as trigger and the left thumb as the spring. The same action from out the sound of the whistling stone as it goes through the air.

In a pool opposing sides fight with rudimentary springs made of bamboo, driving streams of water into each other's face. This is called *hany*, from the sound of the stream of water, or *hany* *hany* ("go for water"). In the water they also play *hany* *hany*, (*hany* *hany*, to jump down). Boys are ranged on two sides; each tries to "catch" one of the opposing side and put him down into the water, holding him down between his legs. An old water trick is for a boy to go down to the bottom and then appear with his face turned upwards, the mouth stretched wide open by the fingers; viewed from the surface the face looked flat and very grotesque. There is also diving for *hany*, (*hany* *hany*, to dive for).

A kind of *hany*, called *hany*, from out/ out/ the sound of the rope as it goes round in the air, is a great favorite. A man with a heavy rope about three feet long, with a handle of grass at the free end and attaching a long of heavy wood or stone, swings it round and round his head. The faster it goes, the higher it will fly out, while the boys in turn run in and jump over it. Sometimes a boy is caught by the rope and gets a nasty blow, sometimes coming in a *hany* *hany*.

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Taking advantage of the natural inquisitiveness of youth, a favorite trick for making money is for a man to appear in a village making pretenses of having a pup-show, something contained in a covered basket or in a cloth. On payment of some small amount, the youth is allowed to peep in, maybe only to see a dead mouse; finding he had been "done," he of course bursts out laughing and, anxious that all his companions should also be "done," he does not "give it away" and so the pup-show man makes quite a good living.

Yao girls play with dolls of two kinds, *lilile*, made from little gourd-like fruits called *shage*, and others called *mumamke*, "a child," made from maize cobs. These dolls they carry about on their backs as mothers do their children. *Lilile* is made of three of these little spherical fruits glued together with beeswax; on the one which represents the head, ear, ear and hair, of the *shage* tree are ornamented in rows to represent hair, and often hands, as in the schools method of hair-dressing. One sees similar dolls made for the children of other tribes. Then, among Mambila's Angaité, a doll called *mumam*, "a child," is made in a dumb-bell form of two small spherical gourds joined by a bundle of sticks bound together with string and wax; on the head-piece string is ornamented to represent hair. Their children also play with little clay images of cattle and men, a custom they have preserved from their old Edo ancestors but foreign to the Yao. The Ashanti children have carved wooden dolls not seen in any other tribe. *Mumamke* is made from a maize-cob by dividing the papery coverings of the cob; on these sheaths are threaded white and red varieties of maize to represent hands, or the sheaths are painted into a number of tags to represent hair.

Lately, the children have taken to making hoops and show considerable skill in driving them with a piece of bent reed (Pl. XXII, fig. 8), while the older boys make two-wheeled representations of bicycles with a very clever imitation of all the parts of the machine.

The whirling-top, *sempu* or *sempu* (*sepu*, Chin.), is found among the boys' toys. It is made of a round piece of wood with a flat top and no metal peg. It is started spinning by pulling off the string wound round the top. The whip consists of a piece of string fastened to the end of a stick. Sometimes tops of large size are used, and two boys whip them from opposite sides (Pl. XXII, fig. 8).

A game called *shage* is played by youths; it takes its name from *shage*, to strike, and refers to the action of striking with a finger the hand in which a bean is guessed to be. A spiral is drawn with the finger in the sand with a central point to represent a village, and a tall-pole pronged on one side to a second point which represents a slave-market on the coast. Along the line, a number of other points are denominated to represent sleeping places or roads. At the village, two white beans are put to represent the two players and with each is a smaller brown bean to represent his slave. At the slave-market are placed a variety of beans to represent trade-goods, cotton, beads, etc. Each of the two players in turn draws a single bean in his closed hands and then strikes the hands, separating them at the

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524 some time so that the bean is contained in one hand; the other player has to guess in which the bean lies and this he does by striking with the finger the hand in which he imagines the bean to be. If the other guesses correctly, he moves his man and his slave to the first sleeping-place. It is then his turn to hide the bean. So it goes on till one or the other arrives at the slave-market. Here he hawks his slave for trade-goods and returns in the same way; whoever gets home first wins, and the loser is said "to have died on the road," a not uncommon event in the old days. It is interesting to note that cheating is sometimes attempted by pinning beans between the fingers, so that in the hand guessed, the bean is pinched between the fingers, and, in the other hand, a bean is released from between the fingers into the palm.

526 *Njenge* (Nakuru, Chika.): a kind of domino, which takes its name from the object which is thrown to knock down the dominoes. The game is played by youths and men, equal numbers sitting in two parallel rows facing each other on the ground, the two rows composed of a dozen or more persons, a few yards apart. Each person has set up in front of him on the ground a maine *oko* from which the grain has been stripped, or each may have a number of them, perhaps six. In the former case, the *oko*s are perhaps two feet apart, in the latter only a few inches. Each player is provided with several *ejenge*, from six to twenty-four in number. The *ejenge* is a piece from the side of a gourd, slightly concave-convex and slender in plan, with the edge often cut into serrations. A piece of reed is fixed through a hole in the center, projecting an inch or an inch and a half from the convex surface, thus forming a kind of testotum, two or three inches in diameter (Pl. XXII, fig. 9). It is held between the thumb and second finger by the first piece; by a sharp movement of the fingers, it can be spun out of the hand and, at the same time, jerked forward by another sharp movement of the wrist. At a given signal, the players on both sides start knocking forth their little tops which spin away towards the maine side of the opposing side, the object being to knock them down. When there are many on a side, each with a number of *oko*s, many fall with the first onslaught, but as fewer and fewer remain, it becomes more difficult, and players try to show their skill by aiming at the *oko*s furthest away from them, along the opposite line. The game goes on till only one *oko* is left standing; then, if a player of the opposite side knocks it down, he puts one of his own up again, and the side which had the one remaining puts one up, and so the game may go on. When they are tired of playing, they say, "Kutale kumage," "We must finish the game," literally "Come on, we must finish." A *kutale* is then stuck in the ground on either side, the blades pointing to the opposite side, and each man, when he has hit the *kutale* of the opposing side with his *ejenge*, is considered to have shown his skill, and goes off. The last man remaining is laughed at as being a fool at the game. If a headman is playing, he makes sure of having his try first, so that he will not be left in to the last. The game has a great fascination for the natives and it is said of Mbatia, the uncle of the present chief (1912), that he was

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so enthusiastic a player that if anyone wanted to make a joke at his expense, he would snap his fingers, imitating the action of throwing the sjenge.

Chipilepene: a Mang'anya game now played by the Yao which takes its name from *chipilepene*, to scratch as a fowl does looking for food. The words used in the game are all Chinyanja. A number of beans, perhaps twenty, are put down in a row at intervals on the ground. One player manipulates the beans, while the other has his back turned so that he cannot see. The first player calls, "*Chipilepene chipilepene!*" the second answers, "*Mwame khangwa* (child of a guinea-fowl)." The first then says "*Nenge ape!* (What about here?)," pointing to the first bean; the second player answers "*Taloni!* (Pick it up!)." At the second round, the first player having picked up the first bean, points to the place where it was and repeats his cry, but at the words, "*Nenge ape*," the second player has to say, "*Falile!* (There is none!)." Then he comes to the second bean and says, "*Nenge ape*" and the second player, knowing that he has come to the second bean, answers, "*Taloni!*" When three, four, or five beans have been picked up, the first player asks three, four, or five times, "*Nenge ape?*" and the second player to each question should answer, "*Falile!*" and then, when the first player points to a bean and not to a blank, the second player should know that he has come to a bean and answer, "*Taloni!*" instead of "*Falile!*" When played quickly, it is not altogether easy to answer correctly, as the end of the line of beans is approached.

Chipilepene mungu (to strike with the hand) is played with four pebbles or beans. Starting with two in each hand, the fists are closed and then making similar movements of throwing from each hand, two are thrown from one hand, or one from each as the one may be, as a slight-of-hand. One of the two thrown on the ground is then taken up in each hand, and the guesser has to say in which the three are. This he indicates by striking the hand with one of his fingers. This game has many variations.

Chintatone: a game of jumping from a big rock over a fire. Before jumping, the boys sing, "*Chintatone chintatone ali!*"

Chindandane (to lean, to pluck): each of a number of boys loosely pluck the hair of the skin of the back of the hand of his neighbor, one hand above the other. They then sing:

"*Chindandane chindandane, ali ali!*"

"*Pluck Pluck, not wonder!*"

At the word *ali ali*, everyone should break away while digging his nails into the hand beneath his. Some one of them is sure to have had his attention distracted and forget to pluck hand, while he himself receives a pluck hard enough to make him jump.

Running races, each boy having a note:—"aa . . . aa," each one in a different key. Anyone changing his note is disqualified.

Jyane: a number of stems of a reed-like grass with long joints, or small willow stalks are bound together by their upper ends. The free ends are bent in a fan, then banged down

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524 on a stone. They explode with a noise like the sound of a gun. The boys send them off, one
657 after the other, imitating fighting, or sometimes hang them down on some one's head. They
go off, making the sound (poo!).

Small boys or girls among themselves play a clapping game called *pyipile*. One sings:

- [53] "Pyipile pyipile, pyipile pyipile, pyipile pyipile, jumpa away! *je pa ndaga pa' ma!*
"Jump away away away away away the one who has passed underneath the at the door
at his mother's,

Nyapile, hane, hane! "etc.,
let him clap now, twice!" etc.

They all clap together at the word "one," "twice," and so on. No one knows how
many times they are going to be called on to clap, and some one is sure to clap when no
word is given and so is caught and made fun of, as the one who has misbehaved.

- [53] *Likwile* (to-beat, to clap): simple clapping when pleased with anything is commonly
AD1 indulged in, mostly by women and girls.

Little girls play at making little pots. This is called *gashiniga*, (to-grind things,
to make a pot). They also play at pounding grain, called *shidishi*, "learning to keep
time," the word itself being an imitation of the sounds. Five or six pound in one mortar;
in between strokes, they throw the wooden pestles up in the air, catching them again in
time.

- [53] "Jashiniga hane! *je* up now! *je* shidishi!"
"The one who grinds little mortar (that) that one which is bewitching!"

This is the song of a game played by little girls. One sits in the middle with a string on
her head, to represent a grain mortar, while the others form a ring round her holding hands.
As they sing, the circle at one point swings in, and one of the girls passes in front of the one
sitting down, her back to her all the time, the hands passing over her head. This they do
one after the other very quickly and anyone who touches the girl in the middle, "who
breaks down the mortar," takes the place of the girl in the middle.

- [53] "Jashiniga Jashiniga again! *ah!*"
"One time, one time, ending off (Jashiniga)!"

is the song of a game played by a lot of boys together or a lot of girls together; they do not
join with one another. Two opposing groups are formed of equal numbers. Each is led by
one of the older children and behind him is the rest of the group, each holding on to the
cloak of the one in front. The followers of each leader represent his wives. The two parties
then sing and maneuver for the leader to get at the tail of the other group and "capture"
a wife or two from his opponent. It becomes very exciting. As they go faster and faster,
some of the tail may get swung off and captured by the other side before they can again
join their own.

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Trapping and catching of animals is pursued with great glee by small boys. They make many of the traps, particularly the two kinds of *lilias*, *slipsh*, *slipshaka*, *slipsh*, *lilias*, and *slipsh*. *Lilias* is set in rat runs and the rats are driven into them (Pl. XX, fig. 4). Digging-out rats is a favorite amusement for the boys and brings meat to the pot. May is the best month for this sport. They are adept at recognizing burrows which have rat holes. Digging is commenced at one entry to the rat-warren, the mounds being closed with tufts of grass. As they get nearer the rat chambers, they smell the earth and so know when they are quite close to the rats. A bunch of grass is then put in this hole, lighted, and kept aglow by blowing on it. One of the rats will try to halt and is hunched on the head. His head is then squashed to kill him effectually, and the skin of the tail of the first rat is always pulled off for luck, "so that they may catch many." They will try to guess how many there are going to be, "ten and ten and five and two!" Each rat when caught is buried under some earth, so that the burrows will not clog down and carry it off. When they have finished one warren, one of the party is appointed to carry all the rats. He ties a string round his waist, and the rats are slipped underneath it and so secured. They then go on to another; the carrier will leave the whole catch for the day and may, before they have finished, have several strings of rats round his body, one above the other.

Digging-out crabs, *ka-dope* again, is another favorite amusement for children; (*ka-dope* is to dig up anything like sand which makes a squabbling sound). Crabs are never eaten with flour, but always with meat, the grain being, "crabs and *lilias*!"

Youths and girls fish with a rod, line, wire hook, and worm, *ka-dope* again, to pull up fish. They also catch fish, using the fish poison, *slipsh*. Birds are killed with a bow and a blunt-pointed wooden arrow.

A small boy, seeing a girl or a younger boy with a sack of maize and wanting it himself, will say, "Let me make a path to the coast!" He will then remove, say a couple of rows of maize grains for himself, work to the interest of the owner; or "Let me make *slipsh*" (*slipsh* is a shaved head on the scalp), or "Let me make the *slipsh*'s eye!" when two solitary grains are left, surrounded by a simple ring of other grains, as the girl's portion.

Children are taught a little saying about their fingers which reminds one of the "This little pig went to market" of one's infancy. Starting with the little finger, they say:

"*Slipsh* — *slipsh* — *slipsh*!"
 "This little one (a) the one which cannot draw water!"

Pointing to the ring finger,

"*Slipsh* — *slipsh*!"
 "This little one's brother (a) the one that plows the soil!"

To the middle finger,

"*Slipsh* — *slipsh*!"
 "(The brother of) the one that plows the soil (a) the one who feeds meat!"

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531 To the ladies:

"*Ensemble les ye/ye les bembé mélémbé!*"

"(This one is) the leg of an ox which walks on the plain!"

To the gentlemen:

"*Chamame*"

"The 8th"

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534 Cat's Cradles are known as *chigape*, "the spider's web" (Pl. XXIII). The position of the string on the hands is as in Position I of Miss Haddon's book and this is followed by Opening A, given by the same author. (Pl. XXIII, figs. 1, 2.) Three methods of arriving at the same figure, which is called "the net," are shown here (Pl. XXIII). Variety C is followed by the making of a knot, figured in C 12, known as "the child." There are probably a number of other forms used by natives, but these, which I saw one of my women patients make, will serve as an example.

534 Musical Instruments. The number of instruments proper to the Yao appears to be small, indeed probably only two in number, the *mungungunde* and the *chigape*, with perhaps the three beaded flutes, *chidire*.

The former is constructed on the principle of a xylophone; it consists of two trunks of banana tree laid on the ground and held in position by stakes. They are not quite parallel but approach each other somewhat at one end, being from one to two feet apart; on these rest cross-wise a number of pieces of wood of varying thickness and length, kept in position by pegs driven into the banana trunks on each side of each billet. These are struck with sticks by a single player, or by two persons sitting on opposite sides of the instrument. Another variety is found in which the pieces of wood, which may have holes bored in them to effect difference of sound, are arranged over a hole scooped in the ground (Pl. IV, fig. 1).

The *chigape* consists of a piece of plank hollowed out to form a resonator on which are fixed a number of bars of bamboo or metal of different lengths. These are arranged across a bridge, and the two ends are set in vibration by twanging with the fingers.

171 The instrument now most commonly seen in the area which was introduced, I think, from the coast about 1880 to 1890. It is a type of guitar.

An instrument played by women — and this again is of recent introduction among the Yao — is the *chimgu*, which consists simply of a stick of wood about a yard long to which is affixed a single string. One end is held between the teeth, the other in the hand; it is twanged by being struck with the thumb and finger of the other hand close to the mouth, which is opened to different degrees, and gives a variety of notes resembling those of a *jeu* harp.

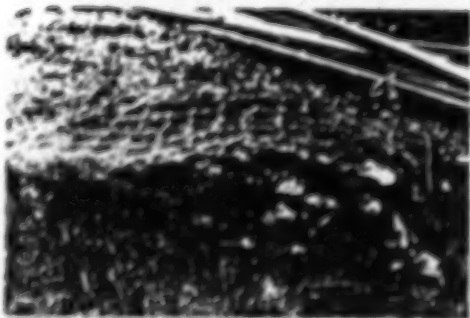
The *ding*/*mungu*/*mungu* and flutes are referred to under *Dancing*.

* *Exhibition Haddon, Cat's cradles from many lands*, New York, 1903.

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1. A BIT OF YAO LAND



2. CLIPPING THROUGH THE JUNGLE ON THE ROAD TO BIA

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3. A MOUNTAIN HOUSE DECORATED WITH GEOMETRIC
DESIGNS OF JACQUET DESIGN



4. A HOUSE AND FENCE THAT ARE SMALLER THAN

[END PLATE IV]

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PLATE 634

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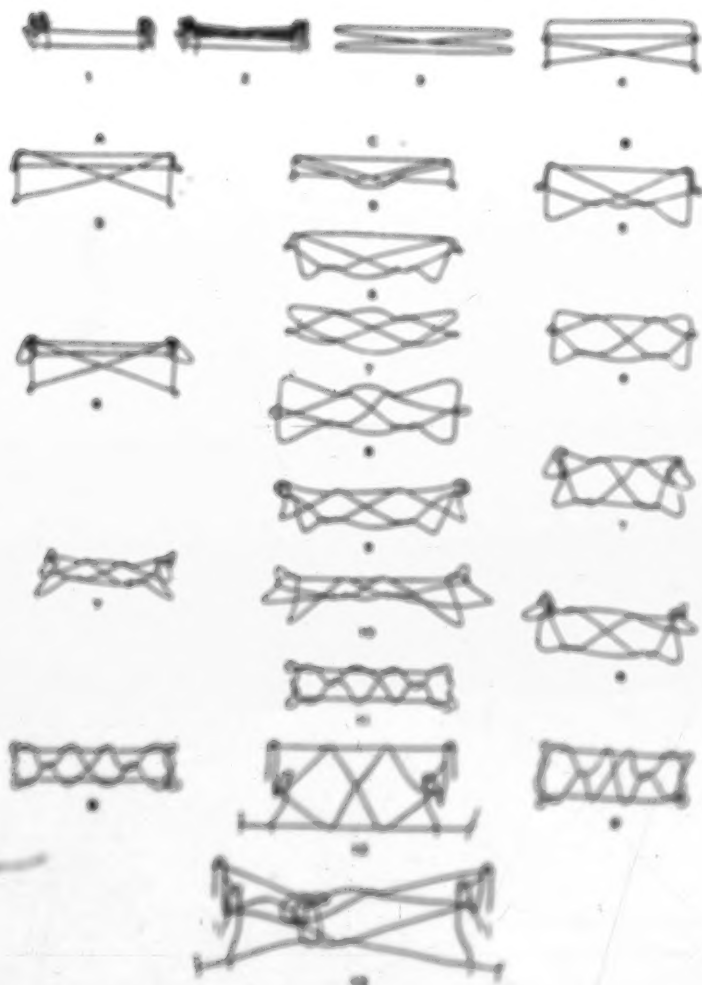


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[End Plate 22]

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[End Plate 23]

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When a number are working they take time from the front man, the rear man standing with his ordinary paddle. The passenger sits in the middle, a child towards the stern. They never lose sight of land even in crossing the widest part of the lake. Boats are now used occasionally as outriggers on the lake; grass houses are made to shelter canoes. The smaller canoes are 2 feet to 2½ feet high, the very large ones used to be 4 and 5 feet high; except on the lower river, where canoes have ends similarly shaped, they are made with a bow more pointed than the stern and having a keel (Fig. 18). There is no ornamentation and no figure heads.

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In every lake-shore or river-side village or collection of huts will be found one or more canoes; those belong to some one man, others using them paying a fee. At the launching of a new canoe, beer is made and the women dance, and sacrifice is made for its safe journey.

Swimming.

44

Not even all lake-shore natives swim, though most do. The art is learnt in childhood and not taught. They are not very fast swimmers, and I do not think could swim very far. They sometimes dive head first and practice staying under water. They swim rather like a dog, both arms moving a little out of water, but not a trident stroke; arms are kept straight. They sometimes swim on the side, but never use the ordinary breast stroke.

Games.

524

Several games are played resembling the game of when introduced from Southern (Moravia); when is played on a board in which rows of holes have been cut; bones are used as counters.

Almashan.—A game found among Akas and Harkings; it may be played on a when board, but is often played in holes made in the ground with stones. The Akas game dipshapan is played in the same way. At Fort Anderson is a heap of stones in which hollows have been made similar to those made in the ground. It is the only place of stone-work I know in the country. Children and women play harkshapan (alms).

A man sits in one basket to keep saying when directed . . . while another makes a pile of stones from another pile of ten, taking one at a time, saying, "To take and put in there make one," etc. When play at guessing in which hand an object is hidden, or one out of two men sitting in a house has to guess with whom a certain object is. No forfeits.

Peashan (white speller) is not a game.

Paul (side and side) one hitting, two or six hitting.

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There are no dice games. Cards were introduced from the coast before the advent of Europeans into the country; the games are various and difficult to follow.

A stylized kind of wrestling is practiced by Akas and Harkings.

